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## TRUSTEES OF THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

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### Fifteenth Meeting of the Latin Club

The fifteenth regular meeting of the New York Latin Club is called for Saturday May 13, at 12 M, in the Hotel St Denis, corner of Broadway and Eleventh Street, New York. Prof Tracy Peck of Yale, will address the Club. All persons who are interested, whether teachers of Latin or not, are cordially invited to be present. The plan is to serve luncheon at 12 M, promptly, so that there shall be no delay. The address will follow the luncheon, and adjournment will occur about 2 P M, *thus leaving the afternoon still unbroken, for those who attend.* Please send a postal card at once to the Sec'y, Mr A L Hodges, 309 W 101 st, N Y, if you intend to be present, so that we may notify Mr Taylor, the proprietor of the hotel, how many to expect. *Please attend to this at once.*

The subject of the address will be "Ends and Means in Latin Studies".

The price of the luncheon will be \$1.00.

Information as to the membership in The Latin Club can be had at this meeting, or by addressing the Secretary.

H H BICE, *President*

A L HODGES, *Secretary*

### The Metrical Reading of Latin Poetry

[An Address Before the Fourteenth Meeting of the New York Latin Club By H C Elmer].

I fear that the ideas about to be expressed will be such rank heresy that I shall be regarded as worthy of prompt excommunication from the fold of all good Latinists. I was brought up in a strictly orthodox manner, and if I have backslidden it is only the result of doubt and despair after an earnest effort to keep the faith. All my life till quite recently I have pretended that I could read Latin verse and I have religiously insisted that the art of reading it should be taught even in the preparatory schools. I have, to be sure, always felt that I was guilty of all sorts of inconsistencies and I have sometimes feared that I was not quite honest about certain things either with myself or my pupils, but I have ridden rough-shod over the inconsistencies and have comforted my conscience as best I could. Recently I have been growing more courageous and now I am willing to admit that I know next to nothing

about the manner in which the ancient Romans read Latin verse, nor do I believe that other teachers of Latin are much wiser than myself in this respect. Indeed the purpose of the present paper is to contend that it is worse than useless—it is a sheer waste of precious time—for pupils in preparatory schools to attempt to acquire the art of reading Latin poetry.

In order to make clear my point of view, it will be necessary to speak of the different views as to the manner in which Latin verse should be read—each of them advocated by authorities of weight and eminence. It is not my purpose to enter into a discussion of the validity of any one of these views as against either of the others. I intend merely to point out that, whichever of the methods of reading we follow, we find in our way obstacles of such a character that it seems quite impossible to justify our asking or expecting any but the most advanced students to attempt to grapple with them.

The differences between the methods are caused principally by differences of view as to the relations between ictus and word-accent. It is rather disheartening to be obliged to admit at the very outset that we do not yet know just what ictus was. We all supposed we knew until a few years ago—we all regarded it as stress of voice. But a few years ago two scholars, entire strangers to each other's labors, one in America, the other in Germany, after a careful and exhaustive study of the question, reached the conclusion that ictus is not stress at all, but merely "quantitative prominence", as Bennett calls it. This view is of course advocated in Bennett's grammar. It is now tacitly accepted (apparently) by the Harkness grammar, as will be seen by comparing section 724 of the new edition with section 599 of the old. It seems then that, when we are trying to teach our boys and girls to read Latin verse, we are not entirely sure even of the fundamental principles of what we are doing. Surely this in itself seems enough to call into question the advisability of compelling young students to devote their time to so-called scansion. But I am willing to yield a point here. We will assume for the moment that there is no doubt about the nature of ictus. We will assume that ictus means stress of voice, since this is still the common view. But, even after this concession, we still find ourselves on very uncertain ground. Scholars hold diametrically opposite views as to the part that the ictus ought to play in the verse. Everybody knows that there is in Latin poetry constant conflict between word-accent and verse-ictus. The ictus frequently comes on a syllable that never receives any stress in prose, and the syllable which in prose would receive the accent has no ictus. How are these conflicting stresses to be reconciled? To observe every word-accent in a verse, on the one hand, and every metre-accent or ictus, on the other, seems to most scholars to obliterate the metrical scheme and destroy the verse. In order to avoid this difficulty, it is customary to read the

verse without any reference to the prose-accent of a word except when it happens to coincide with the ictus. In nine tenths of our schools and colleges, I presume, this custom is still in vogue. The opening of Virgil's Aeneid is still read as follows:

Arma virúmque canó Troiaé qui prímus ab óris  
Itáliám fató profugús Lavíniaque vénit

But while this is, in actual practice, the usual method of reading verse, there is now-a-days nevertheless a very wide-spread rebellion against such a method. The prose-pronunciation of the first word in the second line is *Itáliam*, with the accent on the second syllable. In this verse it is pronounced *Itáliám*, with a stress upon the first and last syllables, on neither of which is there any stress at all in prose, and with no stress at all upon the second syllable, which in prose is the only one that *does* have a stress. It is urged that it is beyond all reason to suppose that the Romans could have tolerated in their poetry such wholesale changes in the pronunciation of words. It is as though the English phrase "a fugitive from América" were to be introduced into poetry with the pronunciation "a fugitive from América", which no one would understand at all without a painful effort. It is true that many of the objections that are urged against this method of reading may be answered with more or less plausible arguments. If the limits of this paper permitted I should like to discuss this question, pro and con, in all its details. But I must content myself here with merely emphasizing the fact that very few scholars now-a-days seriously defend this method of reading Latin verse. To be sure, most of them still read it according to this method, but only because they have been brought up from childhood to read it thus, and they do not know how else to read it. Put the question to them and you will find that most of them do not really believe that the Romans themselves ever read their poetry in this manner. Indeed in most of our grammars this theory is no longer advocated. Bennett's grammar and the Hale-Buck grammar reject the theory absolutely. Gildersleeve-Lodge (§ 749) expresses doubt as to the validity of the theory by saying that "in ordinary Latin verse, at least according to modern pronunciation, the Ictus overrides the Accent". However, Allen & Greenough (§ 609 e, Note) and Lane (§ 2548) still claim that word-accent, when it conflicts with the ictus, should be entirely disregarded. As this is respectable authority for the theory, it becomes us to examine it a little more carefully. Let us see what it involves. The greatest absurdity involved in it is one that has not been sufficiently emphasized. I suppose everyone will grant as a self-evident truth that poetry as well as prose must be read in such a manner that it will make sense. The method of reading under discussion makes it absolutely impossible to bring out the sense of a passage or to read it as though it meant anything. My meaning will be made clear by examining a few illustrative passages. The following is from Vergil's Aeneid I, 76-77:

Aéolus haéc contrá: *Tuus*, Ó regína, quid óptes,  
Exploráre labór; *mihi* iússa capéssere fás est

Juno, it will be remembered, has just asked Aeolus to let loose the winds and overwhelm the Trojan ships. Aeolus replies: *Tuus*, O *regina*, etc., "it is thy task, O queen, to decide what you want, it is mine to obey orders", "it is for you to order, for me to obey". There is the sharpest kind of con-

trast between *tuus* and *mihi* and these words, if the sense is to be brought out, must receive unusual stress of voice. They are perhaps more emphatic than any other words in the two lines. But these two words, according to the method of reading now under discussion, must be hurried over without the slightest emphasis. More than that: with the exception of monosyllabic words, they are the only two words in the whole passage that do not receive some stress of voice. In other words, the most emphatic and the most important words in the entire passage must be read as though they were the least emphatic and the least important. Could anything be more absurd? Let us take one more passage, Verg Aen I, 46-48:

Ast ego, quae divum incedó regína Jovisque  
Et soror ét coniúx, uná cum génte tot ánnos  
Bélla gero.

In this passage, Juno is sharply contrasting herself with Pallas. Pallas, a less exalted goddess, she says, has been able to accomplish many wonderful things, "but I, who move majestic as the *queen* of the gods, the *sister* and *wife* of *Jove*", am able to accomplish so little. The words that the sense of the passage requires to be stressed above the other words in these verses are *ego*, *regina*, *Jovis*, *soror*, *coniux*. But, according to the common method of reading the Latin, *ego* and *soror* are hurried over without the slightest stress. In the first line the stress, instead of coming on *ego*, the most important word, comes on *ast*, a word that calls for no emphasis at all, as far as the sense is concerned. In the second line, instead of coming on the emphatic *soror*, the stress comes on the comparatively unimportant *et*. Let us examine just one verse from iambic verse, e g Ter Phorm 65:

GE. Senis nóstri, Dáve, frátre márioém Chremén  
Nostín? DA. Quid ní? GE. Quid? éius gnátum  
Phaédriám?

DA. Tám quá m te. GE. Evénit sénibus ámbobús  
simúl.

In the last line it is clear that, if we have any regard for the sense, all the emphasis should come on the *te*. Geta asks: "(do you know) his son Phaedria"? Davus replies: "as well as I do *you*". But in reading according to our method, *te* is lost sight of altogether — is actually elided before the following *evenit*; all the stress and emphasis come upon the *quam*, as if one were to translate "as well *as* *y*" with all the emphasis on "as". Such cases as this might be multiplied without limit.

Now, is it conceivable that the Romans read their poetry with such a total disregard of the sense? No one, I feel sure, can adduce a shred of ancient evidence that even seems to make it probable that they did. In spite of the fact that this is the manner in which Latin poetry is read to-day in nearly all of our schools and colleges, this method of reading is doomed. As above pointed out, some of our grammarians already reject it absolutely, others refer to it with hesitation and doubt. Only one or two still openly teach it. Not a single one adduces a fact in its favor. This method of reading is doomed. There can, to my mind, be no possible excuse for continuing to force our boys and girls to devote any part of their precious time to acquiring facility in doing an absurd and nonsensical thing.

But this conclusion regarding the only method of reading in common use leaves us in something of a predicament. What method then are we to teach? Two other methods are advocated. One is that

found in Bennett's Latin Grammar. Bennett's theory is diametrically opposed to the one above described. While the usual method assumes that the only stress of voice heard in a verse of poetry came on the syllables receiving the ictus and that the word-accent (where these did not coincide with the ictus) were entirely disregarded, Bennett's theory, on the other hand, claims that the only stress of voice heard in a verse was that of the word-accent, that there was no such thing as a stress-ictus or a metrical accent, that every word of poetry (as far as stress was concerned) was pronounced exactly as it was pronounced in prose, and that the so-called ictus had nothing whatever to do with stress of voice, but was solely concerned with quantity. While, according to the usual method of reading, the opening of the Aeneid would be read as indicated earlier in this paper, Bennett advocates, on the other hand, that these lines be read as follows:

*Arma virúmque cánó, Tróiaé qui prímus ab óris  
Ítaliám fátó prófugús Lavínaque vénit*

There can, I think, be no doubt but that this method seems, to say the least, much more rational than the method in common use. And it certainly does away altogether with the most serious objection I have urged against the common method. Since according to this method every word receives its normal accent, we are enabled to place the emphasis where it belongs—in other words, we can according to this method (except in important particulars to be mentioned in a moment) read a passage in such a way as to preserve the sense. But it is nevertheless a fact that comparatively few scholars accept this method of reading as correct. It is still too early to predict the ultimate fate of this theory. Suffice it to say that the theory is not, as yet, openly advocated in any of our school grammars, except Bennett's. The question that we are to ask ourselves, then, is this: Should we be justified in forcing our boys and girls in preparatory schools to read Latin poetry according to a new theory, which most scholars do not as yet accept. I can not feel that we should.

But there is still one more theory as to the proper method of reading Latin poetry, viz the one prominently championed by Hale and advocated in the Hale-Buck grammar. While the usual theory holds that only the verse-accent were heard, and Bennett's theory holds that only the word-accent were heard, the third theory holds that both verse-accent and word-accent were heard. According to this theory the first verses of the Aeneid would be read as follows:

*Arma virúmque cánó, Tróiaé qui prímus ab óris  
Ítaliám fátó prófugús Lavínaque vénit*

This method of reading is open to the same objections as those just urged against the last mentioned theory. Most scholars reject it and it is not advocated in any of our school grammars except that of Hale and Buck. Surely then there can be no justification in forcing it upon the boys and girls in our schools. Furthermore, there is additional objection to this theory in the fact that it is exceedingly difficult, even for professors of Latin with all their experience and all their specializing, to read Latin verse in this manner. Consider, for a moment, the task devolving upon school children who are trying to read Vergil according to this method. With all their inexperience, they must try to manage three distinct systems of accents run-

ning through every verse. First of all, they must be on the watch for the emphatic words, on each of which they must put a very special stress in order to bring out the sense; for everyone in his sober moments must admit that the most important thing of all is to bring out the sense of the passage. Then they must be on the watch for the metrical accents, so as to put stress on the proper part of the metrical foot (and here they will not be helped in the least either by the sense or by the usual accent of a word). And finally they must give the usual word-accent of every word its full force. They must do all this while laboring under the load (an enormous one to them) of all the difficulties of vocabulary, construction, pronunciation, quantities (alas, even hidden quantities!). It may be that it would be fair to our boys and girls to ask them to do all this. But I doubt it. Tell them to do it and they will undoubtedly try to do it. But not more than one in a thousand will ever succeed in doing it even passably well, and that one will probably spend his declining years in an insane asylum. I cannot believe that many teachers will seriously advocate devoting the precious time needed by our boys and girls for learning things of real importance, about which scholars are agreed, to drilling them in a theory that most scholars and teachers themselves do not believe in, or at least do not follow in actual practice.

Since writing the last paragraph I have been very much interested in reading Professor Rolfe's remarks on this method of reading, made before the Latin Club, I believe, at its last meeting. He thinks that we ought to read according to this method—that both word-accent and verse-ictus ought to be heard. But he says that he is not sure that he can read according to this method himself. "I think I can", he says, but "I am not sure". I feel very much as Professor Rolfe does about this method of reading. I can read thus only with a painful effort, and even then I am not quite sure that I am succeeding. I have no doubt that many teachers older than Professor Rolfe and myself feel much as we do about the matter. Now the point I want to make is this: If gray-headed professors who have been specializing in Latin for twenty, or thirty, or forty, years are not yet sure that they can read Latin according to this method, why, in the name of common sense, should we insist that our boys and girls shall be set to work at the method, when the vast majority of them will at best pursue their Latin studies only four or five years?

The objections already urged against asking our boys and girls to try to gain facility in the metrical reading of Latin poetry are in all truth serious enough. But these objections are almost insignificant when compared with the one now to be considered. And the objection, to which I now refer, is one that holds with equal force against each and all of the three methods of reading that have been advocated. I refer to the difficulties of elision. What was elision? Alas, will our troubles never end? The answer again must be, "We do not know".

Two methods of eliding are in vogue. The usual method is the rather easy one of dropping the elided syllable altogether. The other is the difficult one of slurring the elided syllable with the following syllable in such a way that, while it consumes no appreciable length of time, its identity is nevertheless not entirely lost. Either one of these methods leads to utter absurdities. I assume again that it

will be admitted by everybody in his saner moments that no method of reading that destroys the sense of the passage can have the slightest justification. But it must also be admitted by everybody that either of the two methods of eliding often destroys the sense altogether. Let us examine a few instances. In the actual practice of the vast majority of Latin students and teachers, Ter Phorm 918,

tum autem Antiphonem video ab sese amittere  
becomes

tau tAntiphonem vide ab se samittere.

There are at least eight combinations of words with which a verse might begin, each one of which would, according to the method we are now discussing, be read in exactly the same way, *tau tAntiphonem*. These are (besides *tum autem Antiphonem*) *te autem Antiphonem*, *tu autem Antiphonem*, *tam autem Antiphonem*, *te aut Antiphonem*, *tu aut Antiphonem*, *tam aut Antiphonem*, *tum aut Antiphonem*. Again, Terence's

rem omnem a principio audies  
would become

romna principi audies.

It is of course quite inconceivable that the verses could possibly have been understood when read in this manner.

What then is to be said about the other method of eliding—the method of slurring the elided syllable (so-called) into the following syllable? In the first place, I venture to believe that there is no modern scholar who can slur the syllables together in such a way as to preserve the identity of each word without destroying the rhythm of the verse, or doing violence to the temporal requirements of the meter. I quite agree with Bennett (*The Quantitative Reading of Latin Poetry*, p 11) that, in actual practice, this method of reading yields more syllables than we ought theoretically to get. Whether this is true or not, there is an objection that will hold against either of the two methods of reading—one as fatal to the second method as to the first. In dialogue, where there is a change of speakers within a verse, the final syllable of the last word uttered by one speaker often suffers “elision” before the first word uttered by the next speaker. Oftentimes there are several such “elisions” within a single verse, e g, Ter Phorm 197:

Geta Fáci(am).

Antipho: Eloquere.

Geta: Módo apud portum—

Antipho: Meúm(ne)?

Geta: Intellex(ti).

Antipho: Occid(i).

Phaedria:

Hem!

Here are four “elided” syllables. It will be noticed that each of the four elisions in this verse is before a full stop in the sense. The word whose final syllable is elided is in each case all that the speaker intends to say. The necessity of eliding is due to the fact that the next speaker uses a word beginning with a vowel or, in one case, with h. We are asked to believe that Geta, when he begins to say *faciam*, must consider that the first word of Antipho's speech is to begin with a vowel, and that, for this reason, Antipho is going to begin to speak before he finishes the pronunciation of this word. Remembering this, he must withhold the final syllable of *faciam*, making it merely *faci*, with the addition (perhaps) of a little something or other that

does not count. In the meantime Antipho must be on the alert and break in with his *eloquere* at just the right time, while Geta is still hanging in the air, as it were, with his half-uttered *faciam*. If Antipho should chance to be a little late with his *eloquere*, Geta would of course be left in a moment of silence with his word still unfinished. All this nice calculation must be gone through with again three times before the end of the verse is reached, and each time there must be the same careful manipulation of final and initial syllable. There can never in such a case be any pause for dramatic effect—everything must move promptly and smoothly and the utterances of the different speakers must play into each other with the regularity and accuracy of cogwheels. I confess that all this seems to me inconceivable. Let us consider a little more closely what is involved in such a hypothesis. What is Antipho to do with his *meumne* before *intellexti*, or Geta with his *intellexti* before *occidi*? The omission of the final *e* of *meumne*, or the final *i* of *intellexti*, would leave at the end of the word a combination of letters that would be absolutely unpronounceable in Latin. No Roman can be supposed to have closed his speech with a word ending in *mn* or *xt*. But how about the possibility of slurring Antipho's “*meumne*” into Geta's “*Intellexti*”. Is not the slurring together of syllables, in its very nature, a phenomenon concerned with the utterance of a single individual? How can Antipho slur his own *meumne* into Geta's *intellexti*? As a last resort, it might be claimed that, while each speaker uttered each word in its entirety, the following speaker, in the cases under discussion, began the utterance of the next word at just the moment when the first speaker began the utterance of his final syllable and that in this way the proper rhythm was preserved. Well, the making of any such hypothesis would be adding a new theory to those already existing. And surely the proposing of new theories on the present occasion is quite out of place. Our hands are too full with the difficulties offered by the old. Furthermore, such a theory would force us to admit that, in the nature of things, no individual could, without the assistance of another person, who will kindly interrupt him at the proper time, read such a verse metrically.

But we are as yet only at the beginning of our difficulties. What is to be done in cases where elision destroys the sense? I speak now not of cases where elision makes it impossible to recognize the identity of a word, but where it utterly destroys the sense, while the identity of each word still remains fairly clear. I refer to cases like Verg Aen II, 550: Cui Pyrrhus: “Referes ergo haec et nuntius ibis Pelidae genitori. Illi mea tristia facta Degeneremque Neoptolemum narrare memento: Nunc *morere*”. *Hoc* dicens altaria ad ipsa trementem Traxit, etc.

Here the words “*nunc morere*” form the end of a speech made by Pyrrhus. Such a quotation ought to be followed by a considerable pause, before the reader proceeds to read Vergil's comments upon the speech or his account of what followed the speech. An English translation of this passage will make clear to us the necessity of such a pause. In order to preserve the sense of the passage, we must read as follows:

“To whom Pyrrhus (thus replied): ‘Thou art then to report this to my father Achilles. Remem-

ber to tell him of my cruel deeds and of his degenerate Neoptolemus. Now, die'!

"Saying this, he dragged him to the very altar", etc.

Now suppose, instead of reading this English translation thus, we should read it without the slightest pause between the speech itself of Pyrrhus and the comments of Vergil upon the speech, thus: "...Remember to tell him of my cruel deeds and of his degenerate Neoptolemus. Now, die saying this, he dragged him to the very altar", etc. Even such a method of reading in English would destroy the sense. But such a method of reading the English would be simply admirable when compared with what we are expected to do in reading the Latin. In reading the Latin we are not merely expected not to make the slightest pause between the speech of Pyrrhus and Vergil's comments upon the speech, but we are actually expected to fuse together in some way the last word of Pyrrhus speech and the first word of Vergil's comments. What possible justification can be found for such a senseless proceeding? I have sometimes heard such verses read with the pause required by the sense combined with elision, thus: Nunc morer(e)!—Hoc dicens, etc. But the making of such a pause interferes with the temporal requirements of the verse quite as seriously as though the final syllable of *morer(e)* were fully pronounced. If the necessary pause is to be made, then there can be no excuse for not utilizing part of it for a more deliberate and a clearer pronunciation.

I may say in passing that I have sometimes thought that the metrical schemes were used by the ancients merely for purposes of writing and that, when they came to read their poetry, they disregarded everything about them that interfered in any way with the sense. This suggestion will undoubtedly be received with the contempt it deserves.

But the end of our trouble is not yet. What, in the name of common sense, is to be done with monosyllables which, according to the sense, must be stressed and made very emphatic, but which, according to the requirements of the metre, must be elided? What is to be done, for instance, with *te* in Ter Phorm 65:

GE. Senis nōstri, Dave, frātre[m] maiorē[m] Chremem Nōstīn? DA. Quid nī? GE. Quid? ēiūs gnatum Phaedriam?

DA. Tam quā[m] t(e). GE. Evenit sēnibus ambobūs simul, etc.

In the last two lines there is a very sharp contrast between *gnatum Phaedriam* and the following *te*. This contrast can be brought out only by laying stress of voice upon the *te*, just as we lay stress of voice upon "you" in translating the passage (GE. How is it? Do you know his son Phaedria? DA. As well as I do *you*). But no stress whatever can be given this word by any modern method of reading the verse. The only element that could receive such stress is by elision either lost altogether or else, by the other method, is slighted in pronunciation to such an extent that it is almost inaudible, instead of being made the most emphatic word in the clause, as the sense requires. Countless instances of this sort occur, but one more must suffice for our present purpose, Verg Aen XII, 656-657:

Turne, *in te* suprema salus: miserere tuorum.  
Fulminat Aeneas armis summasque minatur  
Deiecturum arces Italum excidioque daturum;  
Iamque facies ad tecta volant. *In te* ora Latini,

*In te* oculos referunt; mussat rex ipse Latinus, etc. What is to be done with *in te ora Latini* and *in te oculos referunt*? This is the passage in which the warrior Saces, in the midst of the terrible havoc that is being made by the Trojans, sets out in search of Turnus, as the only man that can help them in their extremity. He rides frantically up to Turnus, his steed all afoam, his face all bleeding with an arrow-wound, and cries out to him: "O Turnus, in *you* lies our last hope of safety . . . Aeneas is thundering in arms and threatens to overthrow and utterly destroy our citadels, and torches are already flying in the direction of their homes. It is to *you* that the Latins now look for help, it is toward *you* that all eyes are turned; for our king Latinus himself fails us", etc. One cannot fail to notice here that all the emphasis falls upon the *te*. Notice the repetition of the phrase *in te*: *in te* suprema salus, *in te* ora Latini, *in te* oculos referunt. Notice again that in each case the phrase has the most emphatic position in its clause, viz at the very beginning. Clearly Vergil intended that the emphasis should be centered right here and that the reader should bring the *te* into great prominence. Now, how is the reader to do this, if he omits or slights the only part of *te* that can be stressed, as he must do if he elides? What becomes of the emphasis on *te*, an emphasis absolutely necessary to the sense of the passage, if one reads *in t' ora Latini*, *in t' oculos referunt*. Can anyone read such a passage, by any method we have been in the habit of following, without sacrificing the sense altogether? And can anyone suppose that the Romans themselves were willing, in reading their poetry, to sacrifice the sense for any purpose whatsoever? Such a supposition is of course preposterous on the face of it. How then did they read their verse? The reply must be: "Heaven only knows!"

I have attempted to enumerate some of the practical difficulties encountered in our attempts to read Latin verse. Let me briefly sum up.

We do not know what ictus was.

If we did know what ictus was, we should not know how to use it properly.

We do not know whether there are two systems of accents running through every verse or only one; and if there is only one, we do not know which one it is. We do not know whether a word in poetry has its usual prose-accent or whether (in countless cases) it has no accent at all.

There are three different systems of reading Latin poetry, advocated by Latin grammars. If we follow the one in common use, it is impossible to read any passage as though it had any meaning. We cannot emphasize words that *must* be emphasized in order to bring out the sense. We *must*, on the other hand, emphasize words upon which it is absurd, if we have any regard for the sense, to place any emphasis whatever. If we follow either one of the other two methods of reading, then we are following a method which most scholars regard as wrong and which is not even sanctioned, to any considerable extent, by usage.

We do not know what elision was. And if we did know what it was, we should not know how to use it. Whichever method of eliding we follow, it is frequently quite impossible to read a passage with any regard to sense. It compels us to hurry at full speed over places where the sense requires a long, deliberate pause. In the case of monosyllables, it compels us to give without the slightest emphasis and hardly to pronounce at all—indeed, according

to the usual method, *not* to pronounce at all — words which, if we read with any regard to the sense, must in pronunciation be made very prominent and emphatic. Finally, in dialogue passages, elision of the final syllable of a speaker's last word before a first word of the next speaker would often result in a combination of letters wholly unpronounceable for a Roman, e g *meum, intellexi*. And here the theory of slurring the final and initial syllables together affords no relief, since it is impossible for one person to slur his own speech into that of some one else.

This is the present status of the art of reading Latin poetry. The principles that we are trying to cram down the throats of the boys and girls in our schools are based not upon knowledge, but partly upon disputed theories and partly upon acknowledged ignorance of the real facts. And they lead very often to utter nonsense and absurdity. Is this the right sort of diet for pupils who are as yet hardly more than beginning their study of Latin? For my part I do not think it is. During these early years they need something more substantial, and they have these substantial things all about them in such enormous quantities that they will find it difficult enough properly to digest these alone. These more substantial things too will make bone and sinew and flesh and blood. But this article of diet the use of which I am deprecating — I cannot see that, as commonly used, it makes anything but nonsense. Students derive from it neither culture nor mental discipline nor any more adequate appreciation of Roman thought or the beauties of Roman poetry. They probably have heard a good deal about the music of Horace's verse and they probably have been told that the verse of Vergil is the stateliest measure ever moulded by the lips of man. But how many pupils have you ever known who seemed to feel the music of the one or the majesty of the other? I have had a good deal of experience in teaching college students, and I am not sure that I have ever seen an entering freshman who could make a verse of Horace sing, or who could render a verse of Vergil in such a manner as to cause the slightest thrill in the soul of any human being. I have seen plenty of them who could "scan", but that was all. And as soon as they began to scan, they almost invariably lost sight of everything else. The voice seldom, if ever, betrayed a hint that the words meant anything. And the whole performance was certainly not inspiring.

Now I must hasten to correct a false impression that I fear my discussion thus far may have given. I would not be understood as meaning that I would do away altogether with the metrical reading of Latin poetry in the schoolroom. I merely mean that I would do away with compelling school-children to attempt to acquire the art. I have tried to call attention to the tremendous difficulties and uncertainties surrounding it and to our ignorance regarding its fundamental principles. But at the same time I recognize the fact that there *is* music in Horace's verse and majesty in Vergil's. Even with our imperfect understanding of it, we can, after constant and long-continued effort and practice, gain some appreciation of this music and this majesty, by the most skillful use of perhaps any one of the three methods of reading that have been outlined above. But the study of this subject is not adapted to young students. It is not, in my opinion, proper work for preparatory schools. I doubt whether it is proper work for the lower classes in our colleges. Such unsolved problems belong to the university work, or at least to the higher classes in our colleges. Let

those students who are preparing themselves to be teachers study the pros and cons of each of the different methods of reading and decide which method seems to him on the whole to yield the best results. Then let him practice his chosen method till he has polished and perfected it to the highest point of which it and he are capable, skillfully covering up the inconsistencies, as best he can, bringing out the thought, and reconciling, as best he can, the thought with the metre. Then, when he begins his career as a teacher, he will owe it to his pupils to read the poetry to them occasionally, and thus do what he can to let them catch and feel the spirit of it all, as far as he himself is capable of imparting it. Perhaps the teacher himself will not be able to do much in this direction. I, for my part, am not at all proud of what I can do. But the teacher will at least bring out more of the real spirit of the verse than his pupils can, and if they get their impression entirely from him they will be less likely to think of Latin verse as something void of sense and beauty. If the teacher can make them feel that there is real art and beauty in the rhythm, he will be doing for them all that he ought to attempt at this early stage of their work. It is no more necessary for young students to attempt to acquire the difficult art of reading Latin verse, than it is necessary or desirable for the average educated man, for the purpose of culture, to learn to interpret with the skill of a trained musician the great masterpieces of Beethoven. It is not desirable that most men should devote to music all the time necessary to become skillful performers on the piano or the violin. If they can be made to feel the spirit of these masterpieces when interpreted by those who know how to interpret them, it is all that they should be expected to do. We should, in my opinion, adopt a somewhat similar attitude toward the boys and girls in our schools, with reference to the metrical reading of Latin poetry. Let them hear it read by the best interpreter of it in the school room. Let them absorb from the teacher some appreciation of the spirit of Latin verse, so far as the teacher can bring it out. But let us not bother them with all the difficulties and impossibilities of the technique. At this stage of their studies they have more important work to do in other directions.

### Tenth Financial Statement

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